

## LANDSCAPING & WATER CONSERVATION GROUP UPDATES

JOIN US FOR NEXT MEETING : AUGUST 3 AT 6:30PM

To: All Menlo Commons Residents  
From: Dag Forssell, Eve Murto, John Loughlin  
Date: Wednesday, July 27, 2022

This door drop message  
is the same as the e-mail.

Hello all,

Our informal landscape group meetings among residents have yielded much insight and many options into what we can do to reduce our use of water in the short term on the property. Ideas such as cutting back on irrigation, understanding our total water use levels, pool evaporation and more. Various ideas are being explored by volunteers on gray water, water programs (CalWater), adding a new water meter, etc. Some nice progress has been made and various volunteers are following up on particular topics, and will share with us.

### **Review or catch up by reading the materials**

Slide shows, background information, agendas and reports presented in each meeting will be available Saturday July 30 at <http://www.forssell.com/menlo/Drought/Drought.html> organized by meeting, and in a dark green binder in the Commons Room Board Room side table, where landscaping books are also available.

### **Recap of Meeting 1 (June 8)**

In our first meeting, Dag presented a slide show to define our group's objectives, with an emphasis on what it will take for us to arrive at consensus — recognizing that we have different understandings from a lifetime of experiences, and that our understandings determine what we each want; the importance of exploring alternatives while withholding your judgement until you have fully understood and evaluated each alternative; and the benefits of planning by way of first thinking through what would be ideal in the future, and only then together figure out what changes are needed to get there.

### **Recap of Meeting 2 (June 29)**

In our second meeting, Eve updated us on what the BOARD was already doing in terms of water cutbacks (mandates by Menlo Park), and arborist visit, and solicited ideas from one and all about lawns, trees, ivy and more. Eve summarized her notes and presented them in the BOARD meeting July 7.

### **Recap of Meeting 3 (July 18)**

In our third meeting Eve and various volunteers reviewed the topics for short term exploration and reported updates to the group. These included overall ideas for saving water; grey water, lawns, trees and plantings, pool/spa evaporation, monitoring total water use, possibilities for adding additional water meters and more. Various efforts are underway to explore these short term options.

We then opened it up to residents who wished to share ideas for the future (long term ideas) including changes in plantings and landscape design. We hosted a group exercise to solicit from everyone what they liked and didn't like about the current outdoor landscaping (trees, flowers, flowerboxes, bushes, ivy, pool temperature, noise levels, and so forth).

**Meeting 4 - Join us at our next meeting!**

**Wednesday August 3 at 6:30pm — outside by the Commons Room**

This will be our fourth meeting, and we'll continue to review our "short term" topics that volunteers are researching (gray water options, water meter, total water use by month, water company programs, etc. ) and hear updates on progress on those.

Then we'll open it up to share "long term" ideas that any residents have about landscaping and water savings.

**\*\*If you wish to share your ideas, please do so! Very informal and we welcome all speakers. If you have taken photos or sketches of ideas you have seen elsewhere, feel free to forward them to Dag, and we'll show them on his monitor.**

Dag will present a slide show of photos from various residents of local landscaping, showing what kinds of plants and arrangements they have seen and what other places are doing.

Dag , Eve and any other residents interested, will present their ideas for landscaping and space use for relaxation, contemplation, get-togethers, meetings, and recreation. We will discuss pros and cons of each, and we welcome your input!

**Landscape Architect – send referrals**

We welcome your referrals for a qualified **professional landscape architect** firm to work with in our efforts. They must have experience with commercial properties (not just residential homes). Send your suggestions to Dag. We are suggesting to the Board that it would be a good idea to formulate a long-term master plan. So far, we have identified three firms to contact and evaluate. Comments? Suggestions?

**Water Conservation Expert – send referrals**

Also, if you have suggestions for water conservation experts, ideally professionals that counsel commercial buildings and complexes, we'd like to hear about any of those as well. Send any names of individuals or firms to Dag, and we can check into those.

**Resident Survey (an option)**

We'll discuss the need for an online survey for residents, as a means to gather the opinions of ALL residents on some major hot topics (ivy, lawns, nominated long term changes etc. ) , as we realize this Landscape Group is a subset of our community and we need to hear the views of everyone on any important decisions for the future.

**Mark Your Calendars! Our next group meeting which follows is:**

Tuesday, August 16 @ 6:30pm. **NOTE!!!** date change! Was Aug 17 (BOARD workshop)

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**IN OTHER NEWS:**

Val just received 20 Information Directories marked AUG, up-to-date as of July 24, 2022. For new residents, social committee members, and anyone else who needs another copy.

A PDF version of this Info Directory is available here:

[www.forssell.com/menlo/InformationDirectory/MC\\_InfoDirectory\\_2022\\_July24.pdf](http://www.forssell.com/menlo/InformationDirectory/MC_InfoDirectory_2022_July24.pdf)